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Notes of the Month.

In the industrial world there is still much cause for anxiety. Fortunately at the time of writing the fear of a great strike, affecting the whole country, is less threatening, and it seems likely that the Government will be able to arrive at an understanding with the representatives of the Triple Alliance. We have had recent experience in Belfast and district of the general inconvenience created by a strike, but that would be accentuated infinitely were the three greatest combinations of workers to adopt extreme measures. There is a widespread desire to better the conditions under which the miners live and labour, and we are confident that their representatives will see the wisdom of winning and retaining the sympathy of the community instead of alienating it by precipitate and ill-considered action.

We have before us, as we write, the report on Primary Education in Belfast as submitted to the Belfast City Council by the Special Education Committee appointed in December to inquire. We earnestly hope that the report will receive the careful consideration of our readers, for we cannot suppose them indifferent on a matter which profoundly affects the welfare of the children. What is true of Belfast schools will be found true of Irish schools generally. The findings of the Committee are to the effect that "it has been exclusively established that both in point of sufficiency of accommodation and the standard and suitability of the large proportion of existing schools, the provision is lamentably deficient. The actual shortage of accommodation is greatly aggravated by the bad distribution in the different districts of the city, and a large percentage of schools are shockingly overcrowded." These words we have quoted apply, it is true, to Belfast schools. But let anyone consider the reports on primary and secondary schools in Ireland generally as recently put forth by the Dublin Commission. No strong public opinion which really cared for education would permit of such a state of affairs. The whole future of our country depends vitally upon the provision of anadequate and carefully co-ordinated scheme of education. For many of us the times may be financially hard, and yet if there is anything for which we should be prepared to make every sacrifice, it is the welfare of the children—the children of others no less than for our own. Certainly we who lay emphasis upon

conduct cannot forget that conduct is largely pre-determined in early life, and in no place more than in the schoolroom and its playground. We plead for the most careful and serious thinking on these vital matters.

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We are sometimes asked if our free faith is making progress. It is not easy to find an answer to the question. The test of numbers does not apply, or else the answer would need to be in the negative so far as the membership of our congregations is concerned. Yet not infrequently we feel that in other churches a new spirit of freedom, and a greater tendency to stress practical religion, are apparent. There is a greater willingness on the part of church leaders to co-operate in matters of public service. All these are encouraging signs of the times. Still, we may welcome them without resting content therewith. There is an inspiration in numbers, and a powerful incentive in enthusiasm. Cannot we ourselves do more to make our own churches living centres of dynamic power? Would not more self denial lead to better attendance at worship; to heartier and more helpful ministrations; to more fruitful labours for our fellows? We do not lay the stress laid by orthodox churches on foreign missions, the implication apparently being the belief that home missions are many and appealing. Why do we not, therefore, manifest this belief in concrete works? If the war has created greater opportunities for us, shall we not seize them promptly and make our Church a greater instrument for truth and righteousness?

* *

The matter of war memorials is naturally very much to the fore just now. But it is especially necessary to see that mere sentiment is not decisive in the choice of such memorials. Many churches and public places are disfigured by relics of bygone times, at whose birth artistic taste and fitness were conspicuously absent. What unrestrained sentiment can achieve is apparent in the obituary notices of our daily newspapers. Fortunately, the latter have their day, and cease to be. Monuments are more enduring—and so also are those who receive them as a legacy from an inartistic past. One only needs to remember some of the memorials in much-visited buildings like Westminster Abbey. All this has a really necessary lesson for ourselves. Our Church Sessions and Committees will need to exercise wise discretion and discrimination in the matter of memorials proposed for display in our meeting-houses. There is no reason whatever why sentiment should not find fitting and helpful expression that shall at once satisfy the donor, and at the same time inspire, and not shock, the beholder.

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The Ulster Unitarian Christian Association will hold its Annual Sermons and Meeting at the beginning of this month. In the past these gatherings afforded us welcome opportunities of seeing and hearing prominent ministers from across the water. The war interfered with that kind of friendly intercourse, but now the old custom will be revived by the coming of the Rev. Alfred Hall, M.A., B.D., of Sheffield, on April 6th and 7th. On the latter date the Annual Meeting of the Association will take place in the Central Hall, Belfast, and we hope that many of our readers will take advantage of the opportunity to hear one of our ablest and most energetic English ministers. Mr. Hall has said and written much that is helpful on the subject of Unitarianism and its power of appeal. He should, therefore, have something timely and suggestive to say at the present time of theological unrest and inquiry.

DEATHS.

PERCY—Mrs. Percy, of Antrim, elder sister of James S. Hunter, Esq., J.P., of Lakeview, Crumlin, and of William M. Hunter, of Ard more, Crumlin, died on 19th March.

M'MASTER—At Ballyobegan, Co. Down, on March 19th, 1919, Nancy M'Master, widow. Interred in the Burial-ground, Ballyhalbert, March 20th.

WANTED

Harmonium or American Organ, suitable for services in small hall. Particulars to Rev. R. Philipson, Downpatriek.

A Thought for the Month

THE SPIRIT OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

"Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves."—ROMANS xv. 1.

"That is the true and plain fact concerning the relations of every strong and wise man to the world about him. He has his strength given him, not that he may crush the weak, but that he may support and guide them. In his own household he is to be the guide and the support of his children; out of his household he is still to be the father, that is, the guide and support of the weak and the poor; not merely of the meritoriously weak and the innocently poor, but of the guiltily and punishably poor; of the men who ought to have known better—of the poor who ought to be ashamed of themselves. It is nothing to give pension and cottage to the widow who has lost her son; it is nothing to give food and medicine to the workman who has broken his arm, or the decrepit woman wasting in sickness. But it is something to use your time and strength to war with the waywardness and thoughtlessness of mankind; to keep the erring workman in your service till you have made him an unerring one; and to direct your fellow-merchant to the opportunity which his dullness would have lost. This is much; but it is yet more, when you have fully achieved the superiority which is due to you, and acquired the wealth which is the fitting reward of your sagacity, if you solemnly accept the responsibility of it, as it is the helm and guide of labour far and near. For you who have it in your hands, are in reality the pilots of the power and effort of the State. It is entrusted to you as an authority to be used for good or evil, just as completely as kingly authority was ever given to a prince, or military command to a captain. And, according to the quantity of it that you have in your hands, you are the arbiters of the will and work of England; and the whole issue, whether the work of the State shall suffice for the State or not, depends upon you. You may stretch out your sceptre over the heads of the English labourers, and say to them, as they stoop to its waving: 'Subdue this obstacle that has baffled our fathers, put away this plague that consumes our children; water these dry places, plough these desert ones, carry this food to those who are in hunger; carry this light to those who are in darkness; carry this life to those who are in death.'"—RUSKIN—"A Joy for Ever."

"CONSCIENCE, CREEDS, AND CRITICS."

This is the title of a candid and searching little book, which essays to answer the question: "May the clergyman whose studies have led him to accept, or at least to sympathise, with the conclusions of advanced criticism on such questions as the Virgin Birth or the Physical Resurrection of Christ, honestly retain his position as a minister of the Church of England?" The said conclusions being such as were published in "Miracles of the New Testament," by the Rev. J. M. Thompson, Dean of Divinity at Magdalene College, Oxford, frankly rejecting the miracles of the Virgin Birth and the Physical Resurrection, "though, of course, always claiming to hold the doctrines of which they were the expression." The result was that the Bishops of Winchester and Oxford withdrew Mr. Thompson's licences to act either as Dean of Divinity or to officiate in any way in the diocese of Oxford. A considerable amount of controversy seems to have risen in the Church of England in consequence. "The general uneasiness at length came to a head when the Bishop of Zanzibar, in his Letter on the Kikuyu Conference, raised the whole question of the critical school."

The author protests against that section of opinion in the Church of England which does all in its power to make it impossible for advanced critics to continue the exercise of their ministry, and which shuts the door in the face of candidates who are unsound on these points, however good their other qualifications. The outcry against Dr. Henson's appointment to the See of Hereford is dealt with, besides several other instances of this opposition. An intelligent graduate, if he has any doubts, and frankly states them to the Bishop, to whom he offers himself for ordination, may be rejected at once. Apart from this he has reason to be anxious as to his own position after ordination, seeing that much of the official authority of the Church will be hostile to his claim to exercise his ministry; he may be silenced altogether. Such then being the present condition of affairs, what is to be done in connection with the possible candidates from the Front, answering to the earnest appeals that have appeared in the Press to join the ministry?

A great benefit to the Church is expected from men of this class, in the fresh outlook and unconventional methods which they bring. Will they be guaranteed to be completely "orthodox?" Is the Church prepared to lose them? This is the problem the book attempts to solve, and in doing so concentrates within 112 pages the gist of "heresy hunts" during the last fifty years. The cases of Bishop Colenso and Charles Voysey are considered. Maurice, Kingsley, Stanley, Pusey, and Bennett, and Dr. Gore, are all names appearing in the index as having been involved in controversies of a very stirring kind. The Bishop of Lincoln has boldly stated that "he believed the men who might be called the English Modernists were not unsettling the faith, but interpreting it and making it clear to the modern man, and within a generation they would be looked back to as men who helped to build up the Faith of the English Church."

In his conclusion the author writes: "'The foundations will be cast down' has been the cry of the fearful in every generation; but when the storm has passed away it is seen that the things that are shaken are not foundations after all. For 'the Lord's seat is in heaven' and the real source and the ultimate evidences of our Christian faith belong to a region where the searching winds of criticism will not stay the advance of truth, for no Canute can check its tide; nor will they destroy religion, which has its roots deep down in human nature."

ULLIN.

"Conscience, Creeds, and Critics"—A plea for liberty of criticism within the Church of England. By the Rev. Cyril W. Emmet, M.A., B.D., Vicar of West Hendred, Berks. 1918. Macmillan.

A Book for the Month.

"JOAN AND PETER."

It can scarcely be claimed that this is the best of Mr. H. G. Wells' novels. There is not much of a plot, but there are a few fine situations and some excellently drawn characters, but we miss the unadulterated storyteller's art which gave us "Kipps" and "Love and Mr. Lewisham." It is not, however, for the sake of the novel that we refer to "Joan and Peter" in these columns, but for the sake of the purpose, for this is confessedly a novel with a purpose. It is called in the subtitle "The Story of an Education," and is really a criticism of the educational system, or lack of system, from the point of view of a lofty and sane imperialism. In "Mr. Britling Sees it Through," Mr. Wells describes the effect of the war on the average man. In "The Soul of a Bishop" he deals with some of the religious problems raised by the war, and now in "Joan and Peter" he reflects upon the educational preparation, or lack of preparation, for our great task of Empire. There are in this book some delightful descriptions of late Victorian society, and of

the attitude of mind of this period, and of the years immediately prior to the war, and a good deal of attention is given to the supplementary educational influences which have done so much to mould the thought of the present day—Shaw, Chesterton, Belloc, Wells himself, the Fabian Society, the Suffragettes, etc.

Oswald Sydenham, V.C., an educated and well-to-do traveller and explorer, finds himself responsible for the upbringing of Joan and Peter. He takes his responsibility seriously, and as he has the means, is desirous of providing his charges with the best possible equipment for their duties as citizens of the British Empire. "His Imperialism was essentially a romantic and generous imagination, a dream of service, of himself serving the Empire and of the Empire serving mankind." He was disgusted with the New Imperialism. "All over the Empire, honest administrators and colonial politicians, friendly explorers, and the missionaries of civilization, were becoming more and more acutely aware of a heavy acquisitive thrust behind the New Imperialism. . . He had hoped to find men talking of great schemes of national education, of new schools of ethology, of tropical botany and oriental languages that would put the Imperial adventure on a broad basis of understanding and competent direction. Instead, he found England full of wild talk about taxing the foreigner. A hasty search for national profit he refused to recognise as an awakening. For him, indeed, it had far more of the quality of a nightmare." The thought constantly with him is, "We have an empire as big as the world, and an imagination as small as a parish." In this frame of mind he sets about his task of directing the education of Joan and Peter. There is a finely suggestive chapter on searching of schoolmasters. "All the nations sharpen themselves now like knives. Are we making the mentality to solve the Irish riddle here? Are we preparing any outlook for India here? What are you doing here to get ready for such tasks as these?" These questions give some idea of the kind of searching. The war breaks out before the education of Joan and Peter is completed. Peter joins up in the ranks for the sake of the discipline, and afterwards gets transferred to the Flying Corps. Joan joins the motor transport. There is a little romance, some good writing about the heroism of the soldiers and the blunderings of generals and statesmen, and there is the summing up in "Oswald's Valediction." It really comes to this. Germany educated itself for war and world dominion, while our education was not consciously directed to any goal. Let us not fall into the German error, and seek efficiency for the sake of "Britain over all," but let us be inspired with a noble ideal of service for mankind, and see to it that our educational system is such as to train the coming generation so as to fit them to realise that ideal. Mr. Wells is diffuse and verbose, but he has a message. We would strongly recommend the reading of Mr. Clutton-Brock's "The Ultimate Belief" as a help to the solution of the educational problems Mr. Wells raises.

SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

[The Editor has courteously placed the space under this heading at the disposal of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service, and the Union will supply material for it regularly every month.]

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SEX MORALITY. This is the title of a remarkable and useful pamphlet by Rev. Stanley A. Mellor, B.A., PH.D., of Liverpool, of which the Committee of the National Conference Union for Social Service say that they "are unanimous as to the value and importance of the fundamental principle upon which all the conclusions of the writer are based; and though they differ among themselves as to some of the conclusions arrived at, they desire the publication of the pamphlet, which they hope will prove suggestive, and will stimulate thought on this vital question." The price of the pamphlet

is 6d., and arrangements are being made to have copies on sale at the Depository, Rosemary Street, Belfast. In one particular, especially, the pamphlet offers a most important contribution to the unceasingly urgent problems of immorality and venereal diseases. It affords a definite basis of judgment, when we are faced with this proposal or that for dealing with these evils. If we are Christians, says Dr. Mellor, we must have a Christian principle governing sex relationship, and that is "*the indwelling of God in human personality.* The test question is clear and absolute. Does this thing that I, or we, think or do, set itself towards the enhancing of divine personal values? Does it aid sacred personality in the way of a more free, effective, and complete individual and social realization?" In the application of this principle Dr. Mellor is led to declare definitely for "equality of personality in man and woman," and a common standard of morality, and that "the primary meaning and significance of marriage is spiritual. The continuance of the race is not the main purpose of marriage. It should be the accompaniment of marriage; but the main purpose is mutual perfecting and development of souls." Accordingly, he thinks that the churches, following Christ, should treat divorce as an unfortunate expedient to be adopted only when the continuance of a marriage unmistakeably makes spiritual development impossible. But "it is an outrage on personality to penalize a 'person' because of poverty, and divorce, if allowed, ought to be as accessible to the poor as to the rich." The writer has some original and outspoken remarks about the limitation of the family, dealing with a very thorny and delicate question in a most helpful way.

When we come to what is, in particular, called sexual immorality, the value of having a definite principle of judgment is even more apparent. Against every sexual laxity (some of which may have their defenders on this ground or that), the author applies the searching test, "am I sinning against divine personality?" Obviously he is bound to oppose what is known as "the state regulation of vice," but he shows himself very merciful to the unfortunate victims of vice. He points out that where there is a supply of anything there must also be a demand, and it is towards eradicating the demand that our main efforts must be directed. "It is ignorance, false knowledge, secrecy, prurient curiosity, that makes the foul atmosphere in which the sexual relationships have to develop. . . True and accurate knowledge in the physiology, psychology, and hygiene of sex would help greatly to dispel this evil atmosphere, and destroy this unnatural attitude." Here is work for Christian Churches and Sunday Schools, and above all, Christian parents. With regard to legislation against venereal disease, the author wisely says, "All legislation directed towards the stamping out of venereal disease must especially be free from the desire to punish, and inspired only by the desire to heal. It is always well to cherish a wholesome Christian fear of too much legislation, especially when, as is so often the case, what we get is legislation without sound moral principles behind it, conceived in a panic, or still worse, in an atmosphere of superior righteousness and wrath against iniquity." E. H. P.

TOWN PLANNING.

At a meeting of the Union for Social Service held in the Central Hall, on Wednesday evening, 19th March, with Dr. John Campbell in the chair, a most instructive limelight lecture on Town Planning was given by Mr. Alex. Wilson, J.P. The lecturer dealt with his subject very largely in its bearings on the housing problem in Belfast, but his main points were based on considerations of vast general importance. He said that the extraordinarnarily high price of building was not altogether an evil, for by placing housing outside of ordinary economic speculation, it brought in the State and the Municipality, with the possibility

of houses being built rather in accordance with the public need than as a source of profit. Like other communities, Belfast was on the verge of a huge municipal housing scheme, and it was for those who believed in real homes for the people to strengthen the hands of the Corporation in every direction that brought us nearer to the ideal. He could not say much about what the authorities were doing, but he had reason to believe that they had adopted some of the proposals which he and others had laid before them; for instance, that there would be no crowding of forty houses an acre, but a limitation to ten or twelve. By means of an instructive series of slides, the lecturer showed the transition from the houses we had, and those we have, to those we we want, and significantly enough, the photographs of the houses we want were of houses actually built amid the turmoil of the war for artizans employed by the Government. Thus, the audience were made to feel that they were in the realm of the really practical. Mr. Wilson advocated the building on land away from the centre of the town, costing no more than £150 an acre, to which the inhabitants of the worst city districts should be induced to go, whilst the area vacated was built over more in accordance with human ideas. To make this the more possible, the tram fares should be so adjusted as not to penalize those who lived a long way off--he would suggest a uniform fare for the whole system. He suggested that in Belfast they were inclined to think too much in terms of percentages of profit on capital; but a city should be prepared to take out some of its dividends in terms of healthy children.

In his speech, Dr. Campbell expressed his gratitude to Mr. Wilson for the able lecture he had given them, and made some trenchent criticisms about the dumping of vile refuse in low-lying areas and then building on them. His chief point, however, was the desirability of getting the working men interested in the individual ownership of their houses.

A discussion followed, and the meeting terminated with the usual votes of thanks.

If the intense interest of the members of our churches in social problems is to be measured by the size of the audience at this lecture, then we cannot be very hopeful for the future. For quite a small number were gathered together to hear an exceptionally vauable lecture. It is hoped that more will be present in the Central (Minor) Hall on Wednesday, 16th April, at 8 o'clock, to hear the subject continued by Captain J. W. Storey in a lecture on "Co-operation in Town-planning."

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

Work of the Past Year Reviewed.

The Annual Meeting of friends and subscribers of the Belfast Domestic Mission was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, 10th March—Dr. John Campbell presiding. The Mission, established in the year 1853, has its headquarters in Stanhope Street; it is non-sectarian, and has done much valuable work amongst the poor of the City.

The Chairman said it was a matter of regret to them all that, owing to serious illness the missionary, Rev. Frederick Woolley, was unable to be present with them that night. They trusted that he would soon be improved in health and able to resume his labours.

The Committee's report, which had been forwarded by Miss C. Bruce, honorary secretary, referred with regret to the deaths of Miss Isabella Riddel and Mr. W. H. M'Fadden, and spoke of the sympathy felt with Rev. Mr. Woolley in his long and serious illness, occasioned by overwork during the influenza epidemic, followed by the strain of the abnormal work resulting from the war.

Rev. H. J. Rossington read the Annual Report, in the course of which the missionary pointed out that although there had been little going on at the mission other than Sunday services and school, his outside work had been unusually heavy. There had been an

overwhelmingly amount of sickness. When he surveyed the work of the past year he was well content, and hoped and prayed for better days, larger opportunities, and additional workers.

The Honorary Treasurer (Mr. J. Mackenzie) reported that the debit balance at the beginning of the year of £14 had been wiped out, and there was now a balance in hands of over £6.

Mr. H. Erskine presented the report of the Provident Fund.

The Chairman formally proposed the adoption of the reports.

Rev. E. S. Hicks, M.A., in seconding, paid a glowing tribute to the work of the Mission and its missionary, and said he thought there was never a time when the work of the Mission was more needed in Belfast than now, nor a time when work of the kind that the Mission did was more urgently demanded from all the Churches. The tone of communities all over the country at the present time was at a very low ebb. Undoubtedly, an enormous amount of effort was demanded from everybody who had the welfare of the country or the spiritual uplift of the people at heart. He had often thought that more use should be made of their great national educational machinery to place the moral tone of the nation upon a more satisfactory basis. Practically all the people they wanted to reach had passed through the primary schools at the most impressionable age, and full advantage should be taken by the authorities of the invaluable opportunities it had of educating the young people in questions of morality, questions of temperance, and questions of the responsibility of citizenship—a thing in which their children were disgracefully ignorant.

The resolution was heartily carried.

Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., moved a resolution expressing the meeting's appreciation of the services of Rev. and Mrs. Woolley. Mr. E. Gordon seconded, and it was adopted.

On the proposition of Mr. C. M'Kisack, seconded by Rev. M. Watkins, a resolution of thanks was passed to the voluntary workers, especially Dr. Malcolm Brice Smyth, for their valuable help.

Rev. J. A. Kelly proposed the re-election of the Committee, and also the Ladies' Committee. Rev. A. O. Ashworth seconded, and it was carried.

Resolutions of thanks to Rev. E. S. Hicks and the chairman were heartily passed, and the proceedings terminated.

Memorial Notices.

MR. W. H. M'FADDEN,

BELFAST.

The death of the above, which occurred at his residence, Rosella, Adelaide Park, Belfast, on February 7, came as a shock to his many friends. Although a serious illness two years ago had considerably affected his health, and made constant care a necessity, there seemed no reason to fear any change for the worse. Unfortunately this intervened, and the end came after a short illness. Both in business and in private life the deceased won for himself much respect and esteem. In partnership with Mr. M'Cance in the flax trade, he was known as a man of strict conscientiousness and integrity. In private life a kindly and hospitable nature gained him many friends. His religious associations were with the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, and he had served it faithfully for very many years. When the Society of Faith and Science was in existence he was a zealous member, and for some years its indefatigable secretary. For a time he also held the position of Superintendent of the Sunday School. Mr. M'Fadden proved a most valuable member of the General Committee of that church, and up to the last took the keenest interest in its affairs. Although his latter state of health did not permit of his former regular and punctual attendance at the services, he was in his place a little time before his death, and his desire for its welfare was unabated.

The funeral took place on February 10, in the Unitarian Burial Ground, Moneyrea, the latter district being that of the deceased's earliest associations. The service was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., Minister of the First Church, Belfast. Mr. M'Fadden leaves a widow to mourn his great loss. With her the deepest sympathy will be felt.

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MRS. DAVIDSON.

BALLYWOOLLEN HOUSE, CROSSGAR

A wide circle of friends will learn with keen regret of the death of this venerable lady, who passed away on February 26th after a short illness, in her 95th year. Mrs. Davidson was the last surviving member of her family, her husband, William Davidson, J.P., well known as Coroner for North Down, and later as a Land Commissioner, having predeceased her by about ten years. Her only child, Arthur Johnston Davidson, died three years ago, his health being impaired by extended residence in India. Mrs. Davidson was an attached member and generous supporter of Rademon Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation, and attended worship regularly in that place until failing health made the journey impossible. Her life was based on the principles of the Unitarian faith, which she found all-sufficient to strengthen in times of difficulty, adversity and trouble, and to sustain in the hour of death. Her religion was of a practical nature, and showed itself in good works of many kinds. Blessed with ample means, she responded generously to the claims made upon her on behalf of charity. The poor and suffering found her quick to sympathise, and ever ready to relieve. She was known to all as a woman of much thoughtfulness and consideration, of kindly disposition and tender heart. Gifted with a happy and contented nature, her enjoyment of existence remained with her to the end. She delighted in the society of her friends, and was always pleased to have them in her hospitable home. It was a great privilege to converse with her, as she possessed a remarkably clear and retentive memory and could recount her experiences over a period of 70 or 80 years. But her interests were by no means confined to the distant past, as is the case with many who reach a great age. Her mind remained youthful, and in contemporary events she found much to claim her attention. She loved flowers, had a beautiful garden, and to the very last took pleasure in ordering its operations. About a fortnight ago she received a nurseryman's catalogue, and eagerly perused it to find suitable plants and bulbs. She had several youthful relatives who took part in the recent war, and their fortunes at the front and in hospital she closely followed. To their visits to her home she looked forward with fond anticipation, and her kindness to them was unmeasured. That she might not pass out of the remembrance of those friends whom she most appreciated, she gave to each of them, in her last days, carefully selected articles from her well-filled house. That these will be lovingly preserved by their favoured recipients so long as life remains to them, needs not to be said. Nor did she forget to make provision for the two congregations with which she had been associated (Rademon and Downpatrick). Both owe to her a deep debt of gratitude for the generous foresight, which anticipated their needs against the time when the stoppage of her support might be felt seriously. The remains were interred beside those of her husband and son in the parish church-yard, Killyleagh. The service in the house was conducted by her friend of over fifty years, the Rev. James Kennedy, of Larne, assisted by the Rev. R. Philipson, of Downpatrick. The Revs. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry, and J. J. Magill, of Rademon, officiated at the graveside.

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MR. WILLIAM M'NINCH.

Mr. M'Ninch passed peacefully and painlessly away on February 17th, at

the residence of his brother, Mr. Robert M'Ninch, of Seaview, Ballymullock, Larne. He was exactly 80 years and 1 month old, having been born on 17th January, 1839. A rigidly honest man, prominently associated with the stress and storm of our denominational controversies, unflinching in his opposition to what he believed wrong or inopportune, he was in private life, and to those who knew him best, of a genial and homely temperament, and helpful withal, sparing himself neither thought nor exertion to assist and oblige. He leaves but one child—a daughter—who nursed him with tender and patient assiduity. On February 19th his remains were laid to rest in the New Cemetery in Kilwaughter, in sight of the home in which he was born, his friend for 54 years, the Rev. J. Kennedy officiating.

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MRS. JOSEPH MITCHELL,

NEWRY.

We regret to record the death of Mrs. Joseph Mitchell, which occurred recently after a severe illness, most patiently borne. She was the wife of a respected member of Committee of the Newry Congregation, and a member of a family long connected with the Church. The sympathy of the whole community, irrespective of creed, has been manifested toward the sorrowing husband and sorrowing children, whose burden of sorrow during the past few months has been very heavy. But recently, three daughters, grown to young womanhood, were taken away by death during the prevailing epidemic. The funeral was largely attended, the burial place being St. Patrick's Churchyard, and the Rev. G. J. Slipper officiated.

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MRS. HANNA.

CARRIVEKEENEY.

Another member of the Church passed away on February 7th, after a long and trying illness, which had extended over several years. Great sympathy was manifested by friends and neighbours toward the members of her family, whose interest in the congregation has been long and devoted. Her remains were also interred in St. Patrick's Churchyard, and the funeral cortege was large and representative. The Rev. G. J. Slipper officiated both in the house and at the graveside.

* *

MRS. JOHN RITCHIE.

All Souls' Church Belfast has suffered the loss of one of its oldest and most devoted members by the death of Mrs. John Ritchie, of Ulsterville Cottage. Born almost eighty-two years ago at Portloughan, Downpatrick, she was a daughter of the late Samuel Bailie, a gentleman farmer in that district, and a loyal member of our Church at Ballee. After finishing her education at the Rev. Alfred Blythe's school, at Chesterfield, she married, at 23, Mr. John Ritchie, of Belfast, and thus began her association with the 2nd Congregation (now All Souls'), of which her husband was the energetic secretary for forty-two years. Seven children were born to the marriage, of whom three survive—Margaret (Mrs. Leyland), Emily (Mrs. John Robb), and George. Another daughter was married to James Gribbon Meyer, a distinguished classical scholar, and brother of the present Town Clerk of Belfast. Untortunately Mr. and Mrs. Meyer both died after an all too brief married life, leaving a son and daughter, of whom the son, Rupert Gribbon Meyer, survives. He was brought up by his maternal grandmother, and is now a Captain in the R.A.M.C.

Mrs. Ritchie died on 11th March, and was buried in the City Cemetery on 13th March. The minister of All Souls', Rev. E. H. Pickering, conducted the funeral service, which was strictly private, out of deference to the wish of the deceased and the desires of the sorrowing family. Speaking in the church on the following Sunday, Rev. E. H. Pickering said: "The name of

Ritchie is rightly honoured amongst us, for it has been associated with loyal and generous devotion to our Church, to the cause of free religion, and to the call of Christian charity and hospitality for a longer period than the experience of any of us to-day can comprehend. During his forty-two years as secretary of this congregation Mr. John Ritchie made Ulsterville Cottage the centre of devoted enterprise and lavish hospitality in connection with our church, and his widow, whose loss we mourn to-day, nobly maintained that tradition, despite many sorrows and bereavements, and the burden of advancing years. We all, ministers and members alike, were sure of a welcome from her and her family whenever we liked to call, and whatever our errand. With wonderful self-forgetfulness this brave woman of eighty-one years, kept her own pains and troubles and anxieties in the back ground, and insisted on taking a keen and generous interest in her friends' affairs. It was a privilege to know her, and her loss to us is immeasurably severe. Words fail me when I think of her sorrowing family, of the intense desolation they must feel at the loss of her who was the centre of a family affection so strong that eventually, I confidently believe, when this grief is somewhat assuaged, it will point the way to their reunion in the eternal family of God. The Dead March in Saul was played at the end of the service as a mark of profound esteem.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N. S. P. C. I.]

April 6th. *Parables about the Kingdom. The Sower (its nature).* Read Matthew xiii. 1–23. Key text, Matt. xiii. 23.

1. *The seed.* In a most wonderful way does the parable of the seed express the nature of the kingdom. Many of us are too apt to think of the kingdom rather in terms of showy outward things—pomp and power, fine buildings, good clothes, courtly manners, respectable positions, and so on. In other words, we look for the harvest, the result, instead of giving our first thought to the cause. Good clothes, a clean face and hands, and the rest, do not of themselves make a good boy or girl. What makes a good boy or girl is the seed of goodness in the heart. From this seed of goodness, and from nothing else, will the heavenly kingdom come. Therefore, if we want to be better ourselves, and make the world better, we must look for the tiny seed of goodness, and plant it, and cultivate it, giving our attention to little, loving deeds rather than showy accomplishments; to pure and noble thoughts rather than high position or great wealth.

2. *The ground.* Jesus loved all country sights, and frequently he must have observed the sower going forth with his basket of seed, noting where it fell, and what were its results. He specifies four kinds of ground, (1) the hard wayside; (2) the rocky; (3) the thorny; (4) the good—and then shows that there are *four kinds of minds*—(1) the hard wayside, which is so frequently used by selfish and ignoble habits that the good seed never even enters in; (2) the rocky, which has lots of good intentions on the surface, but beneath is just as hard as the wayside with selfish and ignoble habits, so that boys and girls with rocky minds will cry when they hear of a good thing to be done, "How splendid, let me do it," and then almost immediately forget when the good deed comes in the way of their ease and comfort and selfishness; (3) the thorny, which is a mixture of good and bad. Boys and girls with this sort of mind have let the weeds of selfishness and impurity and the rest get so firm a root that even though they keep on wanting to be good, their evil habits give their good intentions no room to get a firm root and come to fruit; (4) the good mind, which has never allowed selfish and impure habits to take root, and which are ready so soon as a good seed is dropped into them, to let it take root and grow into a noble and Christian character. Mr. Hirst ("Half Hours with the Parables"), illustrates this

difference of ground with a simple little story about four boys, among whom the good seed was dropped in the form of an appeal to help a disabled schoolmate :—

(1) The first boy was too busy playing to notice anything.

(2) The second boy produced twopence at once, and then forgot.

(3) The third boy kept promising to do something, but always his selfish tastes interfered.

(4) The fourth boy kept on bringing his penny every week until the allotted time was up.

One thing to note, however, is, that it rests with us, if we have minds like boys 1, 2, and 3, to improve ourselves. The wayside can be dug up, rocks and stones can be picked out, and thorns uprooted.

3. *The Sower.* All those are sowers who give us good ideas and noble ideals. These may be ministers, teachers, parents, or even our own companions. God uses all sorts to sow his seed, no matter how humble. Those who have made their minds into good soil will naturally have a good harvest and therefore good seed to sow among their fellow men. (See key text).

April 13th. *The Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price.* Read Matthew xiii 44–46. Key text, Proverbs ii. 4.

1. *The Parables.* Perhaps nothing is so exciting to most people as the idea of hidden treasure. They will go to all sorts of trouble, and even take serious risks in order to gain the great advantages promised by treasure unexpectedly discovered. The gold miner, for instance, in the hope of finding treasure will buy one piece of ground after another, and then one day, perhaps, he will strike new ground rich with gold. At once he will sell all he has and invest it all for the purpose of acquiring the new treasure he has discovered. So also the dealer in pearls. The discovery of fine pearls is full of risks. The diver, say, in the Indian Seas will weight himself with a huge stone and dive down into fifty feet or more of water to pick up the peculiar sort of oyster in which pearls are formed. He can only bring up a few oysters at a time, and maybe not a pearl, or only a tiny one among them. But one day he will find one worth a king's ransom. Picture the pearl dealer making his rounds buying his pearls from the divers, and then having this pearl of great price flashed before his excited eyes. At once the other pearls lose all interest. He sells them as quickly as he can, and then invests all he has in the one wonderful pearl.

2. *The meaning of the parables.* (*a*) *The hidden treasure.* Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a hidden treasure, because when once we have felt its beauty, we shall be willing to give up everything to possess it. In one way or another we are all seeking for treasures. Some folk treasure one thing, some another—pleasure, comfort, learning, wealth, position; all these are treasures. But they do not satisfy for long. They are not the hidden treasure which shall make our life wonderful and sweet. Then one day we learn, either from someone's teaching or example, or from our own experience, that the best thing of all is goodness. Goodness alone can make us happy without making others miserable; goodness alone can give us duties and tasks which will enoble us and bring joy all around. Therefore, says Jesus, give up everything for goodness. Give up pleasures, comforts, learning, wealth, and position. You will never miss them, because goodness is pleasure, comfort, wisdom, riches, and honour all rolled into one, with lasting happiness added.

(*b*) *The pearl of great price.* If we think of goodness as a pearl of great price, we shall understand even more clearly the wisdom of parting with everything else in order to do good. The pearl dealer did not think himself a loser, but rather a gainer, when he parted with all his little pearls in order to secure the one great pearl, because in the one great pearl were all the beauties of the little pearls, enlarged and magnified. So too goodness makes all the little pearls of life more wonderful and valuable. Pleasures touched with goodness become pure and unselfish; comforts give peace to others

as well as ourselves; learning gives us the power to help others to be wise; wealth becomes a great opportunity for making all around us happy; and position gives us the means of reaching far and wide to all who are in need. So really we do not give these things up; we invest them in a great treasure—a wonderful pearl, which gives all a greater value and more lasting beauty. Therefore, in the words of the key text if we wish to see the kingdom of God on earth, with its ruling principle of goodness, we must "seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures."

April 20th. *Easter Lesson.* Read Mark xvi. 1–8. Key text, Mark xvi. 6.

Note.—It is impossible to give anything like an exhaustive account of the Resurrection in such notes as these, but the following points seem to lend themselves best for Sunday School teaching.

1. *The reward of love.* At the first opportunity after the Sabbath (for nothing of that sort could be done by Jews on the Sabbath Day), three devoted women stole out of their beds before dawn to pay the last honours to one who had been executed as a base felon. Their love was undimmed, even though their hero was crucified and, in the eyes of the world, disgraced. They came to the tomb not for anything they might see, but for what they might do, and to them came first the message that their Lord had triumphed over death. Herein lies the all-important lesson that we cannot truly believe in a future life without love. In the first place, if we love God, we shall be given a glimpse of His eternal purposes. Loving Him, we shall trust Him, and feel assurance that He will not leave our "soul in the grave, nor suffer His holy one to see corruption." Again, if we love one another, we shall see each other as children of God, and children of God cannot die. Love shows us the best in folk, and the best belongs to heaven.

2. *The empty tomb.* What we ought all to realize is that the tomb, the grave, does not contain the dead. It only holds the body. The soul is not there it has gone to be with God. The body is only "the remains." The dear one we love is a soul, and the soul never enters the grave at all. For *elder scholars.* It matters nothing to our belief in the Resurrection whether the actual body of Jesus was in the tomb or not. The soul is the thing. In all probability the tomb was really empty, but the reason for that must be sought elsewhere, not in the belief in the Resurrection.

3. *The Easter message.* "Jesus is risen; he is not here." That is true. Jesus, the soul they loved, was not there, but had gone to be with God. It was Jesus' life that proved him immortal. Such a one as he could not possibly die, because God was so convincingly with him, and God would not exist if a child of His should cease to be. Jesus, the Christ, still lives. He is in heaven; he is also on earth. He enters the heart of every one who desires to be good, and gives them a new spiritual strength which makes them fit for heaven.

4. *Life from death.* For younger scholars, it would be as well to point the Easter lesson through nature, *e.g.*, the dead things of winter become the live things of spring. Again, just as the death of a grain of corn means a hundredfold result in live corn, so the death of the body means a richer and eternal life for the soul. It is our duty to keep sowing seeds of eternal life, viz., to set aside our own selfish cares and affections for the sake of doing good, and all that we have sown will bear a glorious harvest in our future life.

April 27th. *Wheat and tares (the inclusiveness of the kingdom).* Read Matthew xiii. 24–30. Key text, Matt. xiii. 29.

1. *The story.* In the parable of the sower, the seed was good and the fault was in the soil. Here the soil is good; and while part of the seed sown is good, part of it is bad. What a miserable trick it was for the enemy to play on the farmer, to sow the evil tare seed with the good corn! If the farmer had been a rich man he would

have lost almost all his crop, because not only was it difficult to distinguish the young corn shoots from the bad shoots, but their roots would be so intermingled that one could scarcely have uprooted the bad without also tearing up the good. The farmer was wise enough, however, to restrain his impatient servants, who wanted to begin pulling up the tares at once. No, he waited until the harvest, and then when the crop had been cut, it was comparatively easy to separate the wheat and the tares, so that he would lose comparatively little as a result of the enemy's mean device. Note, the tares are a little like the good wheat, being the kind of weed known as darnel. The grain produced is somewhat smaller than wheat, and when eaten causes dizziness and violent sickness.

2. *The meaning of the story* is, that Jesus in his wisdom realized that it takes all sorts of folk to make up the kingdom. Maybe some folk are "tares," or at least have "tares" in their character; but only God Himself knows enough to be able to say for certain which man is good, which utterly hopeless. The moral is, not to be in too big a hurry to condemn. We who condemn may ourselves be tares. We may be bigoted, ignorant, self righteous folk, who think that everybody who does or thinks anything in a different way from ourselves is utterly wrong. What we have to do is (1) make sure that we are good seed by bearing good fruit, and (2) show the utmost sympathy to those who differ from us. Even if these others have "tares" in their nature, our sympathy will in all probability act like sunshine and rain on the better elements, and so lead to a good harvest instead of a ruined character. Be fruitful yourselves, be patient in your judgments of others. God alone can judge aright, and it is for us to bring as good a harvest as possible for His judgment. The kingdom is for all sorts and conditions of men, even for those who do not seem quite worthy. It is far better to include them on the chance of making them better, than to exclude, punish and condemn, with the certainty of making them bad. Let us think twice, therefore, before we call anyone "a coward" or "a thief," or any other abusive names.

E. H. P.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—Those who expected to see improvements this year in the Guild's dramatic performance were not disappointed. The staging, make-up, and general effect was superior to anything attempted so far, and the plays themselves were of a better quality. The selection committee is fortunately not conservative in working out the cast, so there is a continued accession of new talent. Thus, Miss L. Neill made her debut as Monica in "Compromising Martha," and sustained a trying part very creditably. We shall look out for her again in future performances. This play opened in rather a low key, and it was not until Jane Box entered that things took a more lively turn, but from that time the play ran along vivaciously enough. Mr. H. B. Hunter is quite an old hand at this sort of thing, but has never appeared before in connection with the Guild. His study of the old woman left nothing to be desired, while his make-up was perfect. The Curate was realistically played by the Rev. E. H. Pickering, who entered into the part very thoroughly. Of course, Miss A. Montgomery gave a finished performance of Jane Box the part for which she had been originally cast—the scene between her and Martha beinig the gem of the play. At the last menute, too, she generously took up the part of Daisy Meadows in "Tilda's New Hat," and carried it through very successfully. This latter play caught the audience from the very start, owing to the excellent way in which Miss M. Neill (Tilda) and Mrs. Jackson (Mrs. Fishwick) played up to each other. The former entered into her part with great gusto, and gave a spirited presentation of a loud, tyrannical and high-handed girl, fond of showy clothes and jewelry, but touched with good nature. She was on the stage throughout the piece, being kept hard at it all the time. Mrs. Jackson, though new to a Guild audience, is quite at home on the stage and caused great amusement by he'

interpretation of Tilda's slatternly old mother. Mr. J. Munn as Emerson had a difficult burlesque part, but did very well. The plays were produced under the management of Mr. Will Rankin, incidental music being provided by Mr. E. M'Cullough's orchestra.

The Annual Meeting of the Guild will be held on 9th April, in Rosemary Hall, beginning at 8 p.m.

Killinchy.—The report from Killinchy printed in our last issue was unfortunately cut short by the printer, who at the last moment found himself in possession of more set-up type than he could squeeze within the limits of our columns. The portion thus cut out was so important that we venture to produce it now. After expressing a wish that the General Synod would establish a permanent Laymen's Committee to look after the affairs of our Churches, the writer of the report went on to say, the vigour with which the Laymen's Committee for the increasing of ministers' stipends did their work is an indication of what a body of earnest enlightened men could do for their Church once their enthusiasm was aroused. It is for the ministers to "show cause" to the laymen and it seems as though the laity will respond. We have vigorous personalities and clear intellects among our laity. Will the ministers on their part boldly proclaim their convictions and ideals, and so inspire the laity to better achievements than the past has had? The singing of "Abide with me" and the pronouncing of the Benediction by the Rev. G. J. Slipper brought to a close a singularly happy and successful meeting.

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